

COMMENTARY

AMERICA'S UN-MARXIST REVOLUTION

Mr. Truman Embarks on a Politically Managed Economy

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AFTER a decade and a half, an adequate political characterization of the New Deal era is still to be written. True, there have been historical analogies inspired by the flavor and verve of Roosevelt himself: Roosevelt was a temporizing Solon, whose political reforms sought to stave off the revolution of the propertyless masses; Roosevelt was a Tiberius Gracchus, a patrician who deserted his class to become the people's

THE groundswell of liberalism that elected Harry Truman and the 81st Congress caught even the most experienced political observers off balance; what is more, political analyses published since the election have been remarkably cautious and uncertain, lacking the usual assured hindsight of journalism. In part, as DANIEL BELL here suggests, this reflects the fact that the march of American history and the evolution of our economic patterns have leaped ahead of our customary ways of thinking and writing about them. A revolution in politics has caught us unawares. This article is an effort to suggest some of the basic factors that have made for the transformation, and to point to the unsolved problems that lie ahead for the Truman administration and for the American political system. Mr. Bell has taught social science at the University of Chicago, and has contributed to previous numbers of COMMENTARY; he has also written widely for various magazines and professional journals. He is an associate editor of *Fortune*. He was born in New York City in 1919 and attended the College of the City of New York and Columbia University.

tribune; Roosevelt was a Louis Napoleon, an ambitious, power-hungry demagogue, manipulating first one class and then another while straddling them all in order to assure his own personal rule. Such baroque speculations confuse rather than enlighten. Certainly, they shed little light on the way governmental action gives rise to new combinations of interests and the operation of these shifting coalitions. And that is the raw stuff of politics.

If the nature of the Roosevelt revolution confounds the strait-jacketed theorists, how much more of a mystery is Harry S. Truman—whose personality does not lend itself to the historical metaphors which always flowered around FDR. How does one classify an American president who, without the rhetoric of the prescribed political sonorities, tells the people of the United States: "We have rejected the discredited theory that the fortunes of the nation should be in the hands of a privileged few. We have abandoned the 'trickle-down' concept of national prosperity. . . . Wealth should be created for the benefit of all. The recent election shows that the people of the United States are in favor of this kind of society and want to go on improving it."

It is true that such sentiments can be found dotting all of Roosevelt's speeches. Yet twelve years after the last New Deal reforms—so great is the Roosevelt magic that one

forgets that no major social legislation was enacted after 1937—Mr. Truman submits a budget message which proposes *more* far-reaching social and economic advances than any budget message in our history. It includes funds for almost fifty new and important government agencies, as well as for strengthening the important regulatory agencies of government. But the most important sections are the passages dealing with industrial capacity, for a full employment economy can be dangerously inflationary if production does not expand rapidly enough to meet the new demands created by high employment and large government spending. In his State of the Union speech, the President proposed “immediate legislation to deal with this problem of capacity and supply. . . . To the extent that the facts reveal the need, [legislation] should provide additional authority to deal more effectively with the inadequacy of capacity and supply.” The steel industry was singled out as an immediate case in point and the President asked authority for the “construction of such facilities directly if action by private industry fails to meet our needs.”*

NOTE, in Mr. Truman’s messages, the word *needs*. For the American government is acknowledging that one of its primary tasks is to set up a human, as well as a house-keeping and economic budget, and thereby to direct the resources of the country to fulfilling human needs. The alternative, on which we have been operating for one hundred and fifty years, is to have resources siphoned off to suit the preferences and whims of those who have the money to command goods—this is the “free market” or “free enterprise.” The emphasis on needs is an implicit admission that the present distribution of income, exerting its force freely on the market mechanism, works against the principle of general welfare.

*The first significant step was taken, virtually unnoticed, in the Sparkman-Murray-Patman bill. The measure sets up a fund of fifteen billion dollars that would be available to states and regional authorities such as TVA, to expand production.

For years liberals, the democratic Left, and the conservatives have so allowed the repetition of their high-flown phrases to dull their reflexes that the full measure of the Truman pronouncements is yet to be taken. Here is no Thermidorian reaction against FDR, as many liberals feared, but the continuation of a revolutionary impulse, however vague and confused. At the same time, it is far from an invasion of the capital by naked socialism, as certain hysterical reactionaries shrilly insist. The prevailing ideologies, on both Left and Right, are still unconsciously obedient to the Marxist notion that only a bald class struggle reveals the “realities” of politics. As a result, the importance of Truman’s program has not been seriously appreciated. The Fair Deal, in its own prosaic fashion, is a revival on a new plane of what, in the early days of *laissez-faire*, was called political economy. It is a reflection of the fact that modern industrial society can no longer be left to the direction of any one privileged interest group but has to submit to political management and political direction. It is a square assertion of the legitimacy of an economy managed by government. The question naturally arises, managed for whom?

DE TOCQUEVILLE once wrote that historians who live in aristocratic ages are inclined to read all events through the will and character of heroic individuals, whereas historians of democratic times deal perforce with general causes. With the dazzling glamor of the Roosevelt charm behind us, perhaps we may now, in the gray light of Harry Truman, see where we have been and where we may be going.

The public face of the New Deal was a set of sweeping social reforms. Quite naively, some liberal writers, and indeed Franklin Roosevelt himself, called the New Deal an assertion of human rights over property rights. But such terms carry little meaning either philosophically or pragmatically. Are support prices for farmers a human right or a property right?

The meaning of the New Deal revolution is to be found in a different set of terms.

What has been emerging out of seventeen years of confused political pulling and hauling has been a definition of politics in terms of group rights and, more vaguely, an implicit theory of justice which sets limits to group prerogatives. This allows us to look at major social legislation in terms of interest blocs: in functional terms, labor, farmer, business; in social terms, the aged, the veterans, the minority groups; in regional terms, the Missouri Valley Authority, Columbia Valley Authority, St. Lawrence waterway. Equally important, such a formulation provides a valid framework for political analysis of the past and future.

The social content of American history has been obscured in the past thirty-five years by such blanket phrases as "the democratic heritage," "the land of individualism," "the American Dream," and so forth; and this blurring of lines has been abetted also by simplistic generalizations on the class struggle between Finance Capital and the Little People. Yet in the last election it could be discerned among the electorate, and between the lines of the press, that Americans were rather weary of political thinking dominated by clichés. The liberals finally grew tired of warning against a finance-imperialism that the "financiers" refused to supply. The conservatives felt rather foolish shrieking communism at a government which was obviously nothing of the sort.

American history carries meaning, I think, largely through the prism of group struggles. This prism separates out its distinctive qualities more sharply than either the cruder Marxist lens of the class struggle—which is applicable only to the early years of the Republic—or the optical illusion of the past fifty years which refused to recognize distinctions at all and regarded the least mention of "group" or "class" as in essence subversive.

In historical perspective, I believe we can see that the movement of American politics has been from a sharp struggle between merchant-capitalist and farmer at the founding of the Republic, to multiple group struggles in which identifications and loyalties shifted rapidly as the society expanded and became

industrialized. The temporary victory of one group, the business class, at the end of the 19th century, brought with it an attempt to identify democracy with the narrower category of "free enterprise." But the depression broke the crust of ideological unity and revealed the manifold group conflicts beneath.

IT is no wonder then that the American political system, offering us a complex series of class struggles, group struggles, and national unity, still mystifies both the European observer and the American participant. Yet if the European and American remembered their first and surprisingly accurate premise—that Americans have been a materialist people concerned with practical achievement and not with ideologies—all would follow naturally. For when one's goal is immediate material advantage, rather than the inflation of class pride and the preservation of status, compromise is the natural way of attaining one's ends. A second premise, generally known but whose implications are never drawn, is the tremendous diversity of interests, sectional and functional, that have arisen successively in our history and the permutations possible in such multiplicity.

The earliest struggles in American history were direct class struggles between the merchant group, represented by the Federalists, and the agrarians, represented by the Democrats. Society was split fairly cleanly between two groups with antagonistic interests (tariff, cheap money, etc.). The unadorned way in which class conflict was discussed by the "founding fathers" is strikingly documented in the Federalist papers. As in the later struggle between the English landed gentry and the manufacturing class over the protectionist corn laws, a decisive victory for either would have decided the basic character of the society. But that early American plutocracy, the Eastern merchants, proved to be an unstable social group that was incapable of maintaining the political initiative. So the Federalists lost. Yet the Democrats—in the face of the economic facts of life of a burgeoning capitalism—could not really win, and the "Jeffersonian revolution" was something that Jef-

person found easier to promise than to execute.

It is at this point that we find the seeds of the peculiarly American party system. The mutual defeat of attempts to establish exclusive class domination left the social system undefined from the very start. It was not predominantly mercantile, slave, free, agrarian, industrial, or proletarian. The wealthy groups, having lost direct political control, sought to work indirectly through the politician. But in a rapidly shifting society, whose very hugeness casts up a variety of conflicting interests, a politician can succeed only if he is a broker and the party system an agency of mediation. As late as 1892, Marx's co-worker, Friedrich Engels, wrote in a letter to his friend Sorge:

"There is no place in America for a *third* party, I believe. The divergence of interests even in the *same* class group is so great in the tremendous area that wholly different groups and interests are represented in each of the two big parties, depending upon the locality, and almost each particular section of the possessing class has its representatives in each of the two parties to a very large degree, though *today* big industry forms the core of the Republicans on the whole, just as the big landowners of the South form that of the Democrats. The apparent haphazardness of this jumbling together is what provides the splendid soil for the corruption and the plundering of the government that flourishes there so beautifully."

BY THE turn of the 19th century, however, the growing industrial class had scored a smashing economic victory. With that victory came some efforts to dissolve the structure of group interests by developing a pervasive political ideology, one which could also serve the emergent national feeling. One such attempt was the doctrine of imperialism in the "manifest destiny" of Beveridge and the Americanism of Franklin Giddings. This was alien to a heterogeneous people, or at least premature. The second and more successful effort was in the identification of democracy with capitalism. The early com-

mercial class had feared democracy as a *political* instrument whereby the "swinish multitude" (Burke) would prepare the way for a radical despotism. The ideology of victorious industrial capitalism defined democracy almost completely in agreeable *economic* terms, as liberty of contract.

This equation of democracy with capitalism was so complete that there was no trace of self-consciousness or hypocrisy. So, during the mine strike of 1902, a leading operator, George F. Baer, could state with heated conviction: "The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for—not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given the control of the property interests of the country."*

It was at this time too that the industrial group sought to translate its economic ascendancy into politics. For the first time in its political history the United States had a national political boss, Mark Hanna. Yet even this overlordship was brief, for as Hanna himself put it, the country was "too big." Because of the location of industry and agriculture, various regional interests would come into conflict and coordinated political pressure would break down. The Populists were still strong and the two strong presidents of the period, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, viewed themselves as mediators between social groups rather than as agents of any one of them. While powerful corporations could at times dominate specific state legislatures, only in rare instances were combinations of specific corporate interests able to dictate national legislative policy. To a large extent, therefore, the political arena has maintained itself as one in which compromise and fluid combination have been the means of enacting laws.

If the dominant business class was unable to exercise direct control of the society, it could yet establish its ideological hegemony. While the middle class (small farmers and

*Asked Finley Peter Dunne's Mr. Hennessy: "What d'ye think iv th' man down in Pennsylvania who says th' Lord an' him is partners in a coal mine?" "Has he divided th' profits?" replied Mr. Dooley.

businessmen, and many professionals) had supported the sporadic anti-trust and anti-monopoly outbursts of the first decade of the century, such opinions and movements were dissolved by the subsequent two decades of war, prosperity, and propaganda. In a singular sense, the period between 1920 and 1929 was the only period in American history unmarked by strong interest-group struggles. (The abortive La Follette campaign was a hollow attempt to revive the thunder of the pre-war period.) The victory of American capitalism was complete, and history was rewritten in its image. Political philosophy, which in the hands of our 18th- and 19th-century predecessors had clearly outlined the struggles of American interest groups, had given way to an ideological *Gleichschaltung*.

THIS unity burst with the bubble of prosperity because the philosophers of free enterprise, rugged or otherwise, did not understand the realities of the "socialized" economy that had come into being. They had failed to grasp the degree to which this market economy imposes a particular type of dependency upon everyone. Business enterprise and the farmer are dependent upon distant markets and governmental benevolence. Workers are dependent upon unions, efficient management, and social welfare benefits. Urbanization meanwhile atomizes the family and the small-town community, making the community something that has to be re-knit by voluntary association.* Out of this dependency, bared by the depression, a convulsive drive to security arose.

In a pure market society, as Marx once phrased it, each man thinks for himself and no one plans for all. Today it is no longer individual men who are in the market but particular collectivities, each of which tries to exempt itself from the risks of the market.

* De Tocqueville recognized the growth of associations as a peculiarly American response to a developing industrial civilization. But liberal and conservative political theory continued to recognize only the individual and the state, and free associations never received a certificate of political legitimacy. Their existence as political factors was admitted only to be stigmatized as "pressure groups."

Inevitably, the measures each group resorts to for protection provoke governmental concern that the entire economy not be overturned in the anarchic stampede to safety.

The large corporate blocs act through prices which they themselves, rather than the market, set; controlling as they do a large portion of the market, they may in times of depression prefer to keep prices high by reducing the volume of output—this will be especially the case when they have high fixed costs.

Trade unions, in turn, seek to protect themselves by restricting the entry of workers into particular industries, resisting technological change, and controlling the movement of wages. The latter particularly tends to introduce its own rigidities into the economy. Unions defend wage rigidities on the ground that wages are not only a cost but, on the opposite side of the ledger, add up to the consumer demand, and that falling wages mean less buying and further cuts in production. This may be true, but costs are borne by an individual employer and a high consumer demand can only come through government spending.

Similarly, the farmer, unable to control the movement of prices, demands crop insurance, price supports, subsidies, and other artificial crutches to avoid the ravages of a free economy.

These changes in the workings of the economy were themselves sufficient to call for sweeping government intervention. But in addition, there are also the after-effects of a war economy, and the demands of postwar reconstruction. Government spending today sops up and pumps back into the economy one-fifth of the national income. Before the depression years, government spending accounted for one-fifteenth of the national income (1927) and during the New Deal period, for about one-tenth. Certainly the manner in which the money is obtained and the choice of areas in which it is spent exert a powerful lever on the nation's economy.

Nor is this high budget a transient affair. An equally important aspect of the government's role in the economy is the new situa-

tion of the annual fixed charge on the national debt, an amount which this year reaches thirteen cents of the budget dollar. The more than five billion dollars that the government will pay out this year in interest payments is greater than the total Federal budget receipts for any year, excepting the First World War, until 1940.

What is amazing in retrospect is that while the commitment to a politically managed economy could have been foreseen, we were so badly deficient in organizing our economic thinking for it. A managed economy requires a picture of the over-all economy in motion. Classical economics, in its dependence on price theory, sees the economy in terms of an infinite number of single units rather than a small number of basic aggregates. A managed economy requires not only that we have a housekeeping budget for the government as the large spending unit, but also an economic budget that states the major magnitudes of economic interaction for society as a whole—the total amount of goods and services produced in a year's time and the total amount of income paid out. Through these figures we can chart the gaps in consumer spending and in investment and, if necessary, make up the differences by appropriate fiscal measures. Yet it was only in 1936 that the Department of Commerce brought out its first report on national income, and estimates were projected back to 1929. Gathering of data about gross national product, the other side of the economic balance sheet, came even later, being published for the first time in March 1942, and then the series was computed back for earlier years. The two indexes as the pulse beat of economic health were first combined and published together only in President Roosevelt's budget message in 1945.

IN THE past decade, we have seen the emergence of a new set of powerful and self-conscious group interests, along with the directed economy they require. A basic and fundamental shift in the relations of economic power to political power has occurred. In the market society, peoples' wants were

registered by their "dollar votes," as part of the automatic interaction of supply and demand. The sum total of individual dollars-and-cents decisions, operating independently of each other, added up, as Bentham thought, to a social decision, e.g., the general consensus. Thus, when decisions on the allocation of resources operated through the market, dollars, not ideology, determined what was to be produced. In this sense, economics was the key to social power, and politics its pale reflection.

But politics, operating through the government, has more and more become a means of registering a social and economic decision. Here, instead of acting independently as in a market, the individual is forced to work consciously with others, and the particular collectivities created by the economy become the vital organs of the body politic. Since in a managed economy, politics, not dollars, will determine what is to be produced, the intervention of the government will not only sharpen pressure group identifications, but also force each to adopt an ideology which can justify its claims, and which can square with some concept of "national interest."

Thus it is that there will be brought into the public arena a variety of conflicts that have tended hitherto to avoid public attention. There will be clashes between industry and government on the key question of capital expansion, between sectional interests seeking to build up their share of industry, and even between unions when they are forced to become spokesmen for their respective industries. But in a more subtle sense, the cleavage will be within the individual himself, between his role in making individual economic decisions and his responsibilities as a citizen. For example, during the war some government officials wanted to know how many people would voluntarily forego the purchase of a new suit so that a certain amount of textiles could be allocated to the army without rationing. A poll showed that almost everyone patriotically agreed that manufacturers should stop making civilian suits and use their yardage for army uniforms. But the individual fingered his own

worn-out suit and decided that *his* purchase of only *one* suit wouldn't hurt the war effort. Where commodities were rationed, the black market represented the sum total of individual decisions while the OPA fixed price was the social decision.

The distinction between the "sum total of individual decisions" and the "social decision" is more than a semantic one. The confusion is made in part by Mr. Truman himself. In his speech before the National Planning Association in which he sought to distinguish between "controls" and "planning," the President pointed out that in our daily activity we all plan. This is true. But in such activities we each plan for ourselves, and the Utilitarian philosophers, presupposing a natural harmony of society arising out of a division of labor and the interdependence of man, thought that the sum total of each man's planning would be helpful for all. This is the basis of the doctrine that each man following his own self-interest would help society. But what government planning presupposes is some over-all mechanism responsible for the crucial decisions regarding the balancing of the economy. Thus, each man is *not* fully free to follow his own self-interest. There is an over-riding social decision, established before action, which tends to shape each man's action. And this social decision is necessarily ideological.

IF, IN coming years, ideological arguments will increasingly influence the political decision, what are the lines that will be drawn? How will private group policy square with national interest? There are signs that a new debate on the character of freedom is in the offing, a debate which will determine the course of the Truman administration, and the pattern of American politics for years to come.

Of the three major functional groups in our society, the farmers are in the best position. Neither labor nor business will attack them, although the Republicans in the last election did raise the issue of high support prices. The farmers' argument has the weight of American tradition; everyone knows that

an independent middle class is a guarantee of freedom. The simple paradox, however, is that this old middle class today stakes its freedom upon dependence, upon continuing government support.

The theme of the business groups, "free enterprise," is by now somewhat frayed in its dull repetitiveness. Yet it is a pity that the phrase has become a cliché, for an active commitment to its principles would be an important contribution to the defense of freedom. Many business spokesmen decry government intervention (a "hybrid Keynesian welfare state," Lewis Brown of Johns Manville accurately called it) as interfering with "perfectly natural fluctuations" of the economy. Yet what such ideologues have to learn is that economics follows no "natural laws." If it did, the ability of man by conscious intelligence to master and transform his social environment would be denied. Economics is not a science of discovering a set of hidden supra-human absolutes and obeying them, but an assertion that if certain human goals are desired then certain means must be fashioned to attain them.

If business is sincere in its fear of statism *per se*, not merely of a statism that it does not control, then one of the major factors contributing to the growth of fascism in other countries will have been removed here.* If Hayek, Jewkes, et al., are to be applied without discount and at full coinage, then the conservative party must spell out a real anti-monopoly approach. The problem, however, is that business in action rarely demonstrates that sense of social responsibility which its ideologues ascribe to it. To demand today simply that the economy should be "uncontrolled" is meaningless: even with the best will in the world, one cannot spend forty billion dollars without practically *determining* economic developments. Whether significant elements of business will gracefully accept the mandate of the recent election for increased government

*In this sense one of the key doctrines in the revolutionary Marxist theory—that the capitalist class, when threatened, imposes fascism as a last resort—is being tested here and in Britain.

activity or—in blind resentment at loss of social power—will respond by supporting extreme reactionary elements (these might demand a complete economic hands-off policy, or a naked statism in the name of Americanism, or both)—this remains to be seen.

Nor has labor a full-blown ideology. In the past it has, largely through the AFL, adapted itself slowly, pragmatically, to the industrial environment and functioned there as a vested interest group. Only in recent years, where the new unions operating at the heart of the economy have become sensitive to the over-all economic situation, has a positive attitude toward government emerged. And in these groups it has been largely the influence of the New Deal intellectuals and new influential figures in the government bureaucracy, who, identifying themselves with labor, have sought to provide a rationale for government's role.

IF, AS Justice Douglas claims, labor was the prime promoter of the human-welfare state, it acted unconsciously and without contrived purpose. And large sections of labor, particularly the AFL, are not too happy over that welfare state. The dilemma arises out of two conflicting roles. As a *trade union*, labor is concerned largely with creating a job monopoly, and getting protection for the particular industry it serves in order to assure continued employment. In that sense it tends to become integral to the economy, and at times works in collusion with the employer against the rest of the economy. However, it is also part of the *labor movement*, where it concerns itself with the larger social framework and presses for government intervention to assure the things it wants: social security, protection of organization, and, most important, government spending to maintain purchasing power.

A conflict of roles must make itself felt in the contradiction between the two needs. For example, both the AFL and the CIO shipping unions have whipped up a strong agitation to prevent ECA from shipping a higher proportion of Marshall Plan goods in foreign bottoms. Their simple concern is the

rising unemployment in the industry. Yet rational economics tells us (a) that if we wish to sell abroad, others must be able to sell to us or provide services, and (b) shipping plays a proportionately more important role in the economies of Norway and England than it does in America.

We find that the powerful railway unions as well as the miners oppose the development of the St. Lawrence waterway, again for the purpose of protecting their members' livelihood, although such a step is necessary to provide cheap power to New England and cheaper water transportation for the mid-West. Another illustration is the stand of the AFL cement workers in favor of the basing-point system of enforcing uniform prices throughout the industry, which, as the Farmers Union points out in an attack on the system, is a means of keeping local industries down. The legitimate private fear of the union is that the breaking up of the basing-point system will force some plants to move and thus uproot the workers and their families.

How labor will square its many *union* problems, its stake in specific industries, with its wider *labor* perspective is still a moot point.

While such problems are now beginning to be felt, the real bite is still to come. Quite belligerently, but uncritically, many unions, particularly in the CIO, now believe that full employment can be maintained only by government spending. But in a full employment economy some government control of wage policy is necessary if we are to avoid inflation and inequities. Can we allow strong unions to gain added wages for their members only because of their concentrated power or strategic economic position without reference to the economic situation as a whole?

Under full employment an increase in the general wage level that is not to be inflationary has to be related to increased productivity—and inequities can only be solved by a national wage policy. Is the labor movement willing to surrender a large part of its rights as trade unions to set its own wage policies, and is it ready to subordinate its

individual wage bargains to a national wage policy?

THE fundamental questions facing the Fair Deal and the American political community, then, are: just how is the managed economy to be managed, and how are we to achieve a popularly accepted definition of an over-all social interest?

If we accept Keynes' proposition that in a managed economy the major government controls should be largely fiscal rather than bear directly on production—to what extent can we say the Truman program is heading for this society? If we take the President's threat to the steel industry at face value, presumably he might go even further. The Truman program is a clear-cut assertion of the duties of government in a managed economy. It has established a precedent—by giving sanction to the new tradition of social intervention—whose importance to the future of American politics cannot be overemphasized. Yet in the overall assessment of its policies, one finds that there is still a wide gap between program and practice. Washington remains today largely a giant pork-barrel with various groups converging to exert pressure for their needs. The present moment is one of legislation, staffing bureaus, working out rules of procedure, political and sectional maneuvering. But in the not too distant future these matters will have to give way to a consideration of political fundamentals.

A general theory as to how the satisfaction of varied group interests may be harmonized with the general welfare remains to be worked out. We have a managed economy, but the principles of management remain undefined. Mr. Truman presumably is going to give the people "what they want." But this policy brings into prominence our second question: whether transient majority coalitions can offer a convincing theory of social justice.

We are floundering, both in practice and

in analysis, because we no longer know what holds a society together. The political strength of the American "founding fathers," and what imparted an amazing sense of breadth and vitality to their discussions, was the fact that their thinking was rooted both in tradition and in a coherent moral order that assigned man—and men—a certain place both in nature and vis-à-vis one another. Their moral conceptions were rooted either in Locke's theory of natural rights or in Hobbes' theory of the need of law and authority to keep the passions of men in check; out of these arose conflicting descriptions of the rights and privileges of men. But we have little basis today for accepting either of these political myths. And where group relations amid the multiple identities created by varying allegiances are mediated largely through the mesh of politics, what is the basis of the over-riding unity of our social groups?

In a self-regulating market, the unit of action is the individual and an intelligent choice is largely the hedonistic calculus of his own desires. But our own time places a premium on social intelligence and on a new view of citizenship. Necessarily man is a member of more than one association; necessarily the decisions of these different associations determine the general fate. If a democratic society is to survive—and by that term I mean simply the principle of toleration among groups—then some new sense of civic obligation must arise that will be strong enough to command the allegiance of all groups and provide a principle of equity in the distribution of the rewards and privileges of society.

It will be up to the Truman administration—and eventually it will be up to the American body politic—to arrange the relationship between government and people in a way that permits this civic sense to emerge and sustain itself. Can it be done? At the moment, the omens are ambiguous enough to discourage despair without exactly encouraging hope.